



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

THE

# Old and New Testament Student

---

VOL. XI.

SEPTEMBER, 1890.

No. 3.

---

A PYRAMID upon its apex is in a state of most unstable equilibrium. A pyramid upon its base is not easily overturned. Yet many people, in constructing a conception of the Bible or of Christ, insist upon putting the pyramid of faith upon its apex, to the great danger of its overthrow.

If Christ did this, or was that, it is said, I cannot believe in Him as the Divine Saviour of men. If He made intoxicating wine, or if He did not know who wrote every one of the books of the Old Testament, I cannot accept Him as teacher and Lord. If the Bible has in it one scientific or historical allusion that is not in harmony with absolute truth, I cannot accept it as the Word of God. So is the pyramid of faith planted upon its apex.

The folly of such a course is shown by the history of the past. Men once said, "If the world is round, the Bible cannot be the Word of God." Yet we easily believe now in both the roundness of the world and the Divine authorship of the Bible. Later it was said, "If the world was not made, and the fullness thereof, in six days of twenty-four hours each, the Bible is not divine." In this case, also, a way was found to take the pyramid from its apex, and thus to save our faith. How very absurd to go on repeating this process for ever !

---

THE fact is, this work of making our faith in the divinity of the written Word, or the Word made flesh, rest upon some notion of what we think either is or ought to be, is not only shown, by the history of the past, to be dangerous to faith, but it is

unreasonable in itself. It is nothing else than setting up human reason as the final judge in regard to what God has done and can do. It is saying, if there is an incarnation, it must result in such and such facts. If God gives to man a book, it must be a book, the pattern of which I can draw upon my nail. Now, when a thinker who denies the reality of the supernatural in nature or history reasons thus, we say he is a rationalist, and that he is setting his reason up as a judge of God. We say rightly and well. Because he affirms that his knowledge of God is final and complete, or that he knows the universe so thoroughly and so well that he can be utterly sure there is no God in it. Such a claim is the height of conceit and folly. But, after all, is there much difference between such a thinker and the man who claims that he has so far reasoned out God, and so known the Almighty unto perfection, that he can surely say what will be exactly the results when He becomes flesh, or exactly what will be, or will not be, the books which He will cause to be written for men? From what source can this knowledge be obtained? Not from God himself; for He has nowhere told us the truth about these matters. Not from the facts in the life of Jesus, and in the Bible itself; for the question is what these facts really are. To assume, and not to determine, the true character of the facts, is to beg the whole question. The seeming knowledge is only deductions from the data furnished by the human reason. A God is made in the mind, by the mind itself working upon its own philosophical conceptions, and to this God possibilities are assigned in harmony with these conceptions. Then it is easy to say what this God will, or will not, do. But this is only to make reason the judge of God. It is rationalism. This orthodox rationalism is as conceited and absurd as any other.

---

IT IS much more reasonable, as well as more safe, to rest our faith upon what we know, from the facts in the case, Jesus and the Bible are, rather than upon what we think they are not. Then we place the pyramid upon its base. The Bible claims to be from God. Jesus claims to be from

God. They and their history in the world can only be explained by admitting their claims. If any one feels there are difficulties in the way of believing Jesus and the Bible to be divine, if he is an honest thinker, he will find the difficulties to be vastly greater in attempting to account for them without recognizing them as divine. God is their only satisfactory and complete, and, therefore, their only reasonable and scientific, explanation. That they are divine, however, does not in itself determine, without further study, just what they are in all particulars. It is with them as with nature. God is the only satisfactory explanation of nature. But this established, we do not at once know all that nature is. We study it in all its parts, and in all its workings, to think God's thoughts after Him. So we come to know His works. In like way we must come to know His Word and His Son. We must honestly ask for, and earnestly seek after, all the facts that lie in each, and relate to both, and then must gather from these facts their whole meaning. Thus we never can show, however far our inquiries are pushed, that either is not from God ; but we shall only come better to know what the Divine Man and the Divine Book really are. It is in the interests of this knowledge that the STUDENT was founded and is conducted. Its aim is to find and teach, as far as possible, all the facts of the Divine Man and the Divine Book.

---

THE author of *God in His World* has some interesting and just remarks on the influence of the prophets in the life of the Chosen People. He maintains that it was the prophetic movement which preserved the vitality and simplicity of the Hebrew faith. It came naturally into contact with the state religion, representing as it did the spiritual freedom of the people. One would expect that the holy city would hate and kill the prophets. But we are ourselves prone to glorify the very features of Judaism that the prophets deprecated, the Mosaic ritual, the temple, and forget the spiritual religion for which prophecy stood. The synagogue was in its inception a prophetic institution, as its form of worship shows, though it fell under the sway of the theocracy when prophecy as a

vital power perished. But, as the writer adds, the prophets themselves were born out of the popular faith and are representatives of that divine historical movement which reveals itself in Israel's history, and which is the root of the writings which we call the Bible.

---

THE glory of prophecy is its power to infuse a fresh stream of spiritual vigor into established forms of life. The tendency of organized society is toward institutions, and the peril here is of satisfaction in these monuments of human pride. The writer just referred to declares that the people is blessed which, "generation after generation, has a school of prophets to break up those strictures and to call men back with Isaiah-like yearning to the love of the living God." Such was the work of prophecy in Israel. But, in this large sense, there have been prophets in all nations, and these have succeeded or failed, according as they have wrought toward this great end of spiritual regeneration. Greece had her prophets, but they were satisfied to minister to the "martial and heroic pride" of the nation. They helped to "disintegrate the old sacred foundations," but they substituted no real divine material in place of what they destroyed. The Christian preacher is our prophet to-day, and if he is true to his mission, he is ever calling us back to the real, the eternal, the spiritual, interpreting to us the meaning of passing events in this light, and warning us of the transitoriness of all institutional life. Often this prophetic office is held by a man of the people who partakes of the simplicity and clear vision of unsophisticated humanity, and who is hereby able to pierce the shams and expose the hollowness of much that we proudly boast as part of our civilization. Happy such prophets seldom are, but blessed the people among whom they dwell.

---

DOES the Christian preacher realize the dignity and glory of this prophetic mission with which he is entrusted? Does he come in any way near comprehending his responsibility in this great prophetic office? Does he see that this calls upon

him to strive after the highest and broadest culture, the largest range of vision and the finest power of insight? All this—that he may bring God’s thought to bear upon the secularisms and crude establishments of human sagacity, riddle them with the sword of the Spirit, and build upon their ruins the foundations of the City of God?

Let him listen, when he is tempted to ride upon the current of human progress, or find the sources and stimuli for his prophecy in the teachings of merely human thinkers or the doings of merely human energy however striking—let him listen to these words of one of the truest of his own number who has exemplified in very deed these words which he recently wrote for the readers of the *STUDENT*.

“I think that the teaching of the Bible, or exegetical preaching, is altogether the principal business of the Christian minister. He is God’s prophet to the Church and to the world; and what more important thing can he do than to unfold his Master’s message? Public exegesis, when it is both truthful and useful, is, it seems to me, the highest kind of sacred oratory.”